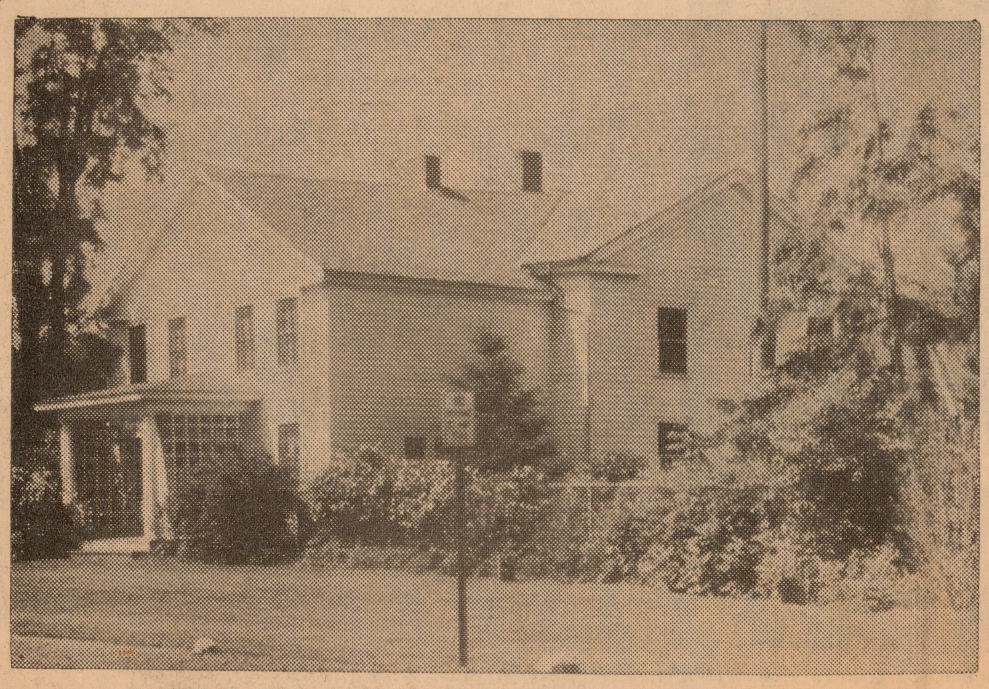
Still C-o-o-l
Sunny, little
warmer tomorrow

ESTABLISHED IN 1904

THE YPSILANTI PRESS

YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1962



FOR ITS NEW super highway the State of Michigan needs to remove this old inn, the spot where most of the history of Rawsonville took place. It is 130 years old.

Inn Succumbs to Progress

Highway To Erase Historic Rawsonville Building

By EILEEN HARRISON
Of The Press Staff

Washington didn't sleep there but Henry Ford danced there, Indians traded there and pioneers found it a welcome stop between Detroit and Ypsilanti.

It will soon be splinters and its site a new superhighway.

Thus will the once thriving Village of Rawsonville lose its last distinguishing mark. The old inn, which Ford loved to visit, and where the slate, with his name written in his own hand remains, will soon be torn down to make room for the four lane highway south of the new I—94 - Rawsonville Rd. cloverleaf.

In 1932, when the building was a century old, the motor magnate had the dance hall on the second floor restored to its original condition. Although the structure was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Bennett, the hall remained open for use of scholars in the Willow Run School, which Ford supported and where early country school teaching was retained.

When the renovated hall was dedicated Mr. Ford's old time dancing instructor, John Lovett, was on hand to teach the children almost forgotten steps. There were over 200 guests there, but Ford himself could not come due to a finger injury received while he was working on a motor for his next car model.

It was the slate which Mr. Barlow had used as a boy which Ford autographed.

With the closing of the school when Ford built the Bomber plant use of the dance hall ceased, but the Bennetts kept it just as it was.

The had restored the remainder of the building as closely as possible to its early days and Mrs. Bennett devoted herself to finding furnishings of that period.

When she died three years ago she had an authentic collection which has been kept in the inn, just as she left it. Now, piece by piece, the treasures are being disposed of in anticipation of D-Day (destruction day) for the building.

The road builders will take over July 1.

Mrs. Bennett's sister, Mrs. H.B. Mosley, who lives across the road, is now transplanting the roses. The rain tree, hibiscus, peonies, and lilies have been moved. The wisteria vine over the side door, is luxuriant still but there are misgivings about moving it.

All winter there has been a procession of antique dealers amazed at what they found. The 14 room inn was a virtual museum.

Particularly interesting is a room known as the Frank Cody room in which the former superintendent of the Detroit schools had assembled his parents' an grandparents' furniture.

Deacon benches from the porch were almost the first things purchased by antique dealers and Mrs. Bennett's remarkable collection of early glassware including a huge punchbowl, was next.

Much of her collection of early books is gone but there are still interesting selections. The oldest is a psalm and hymn book published in 1815.

Some of the smaller Bibles are still there. An 1829 English reader is far from those of present day schools. It is divided into "argumentive, didactic, pathetic, descriptive and promiscuous" dialogues.

An old recipe book contains instructions for making such dishes as "johnny cake" and "sago pudding."

Most of the bigger pieces of furniture are still at the inn, including the black walnut sideboard with its marble top and carved pigeons and fruit. A Vose and Son grand piano maintains its place in what was the tap room where the shelves for the liquors remain.

This room also contains some choice glassware, goblets, glasses, honey dishes, pitchers and salt dishes. There too are old fashioned rockers in beautiful designs.

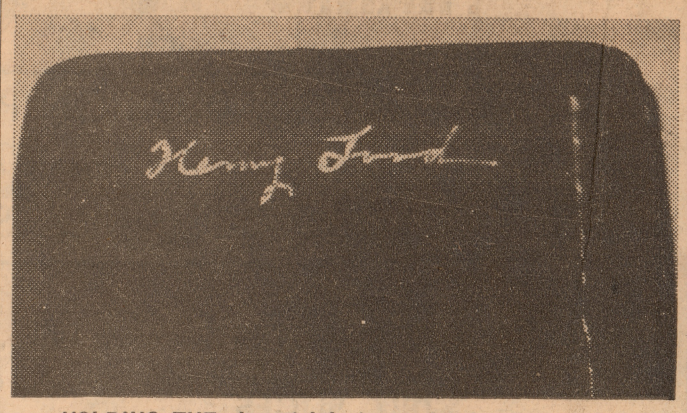
The support for the center of this room was fashioned from the shaft of the Barlow flour mill which was washed away in a spring freshet in 1900.

The old walnut bar is still at the inn. Even a sample of the original wallpaper was preserved by Mrs. Bennett.

The inn was built 130 years ago by a Mr. Rothwell and was located on the Indian trail to Malden, Canada. It is on the Washtenaw side of the county line a circumstance which in later years made it popular for cock fight de-

(Continued on page 8 column 1)

EIGHTY THREE years ago this little church in Rawsonville was dedicated. It was still in use during the bomber plant boom. Eventually its pews were moved out and the structure was converted to storage of apples. Now it is to be torn down for the expansion of Rawsonville Rd.



HOLDING THE slate tightly in one hand and cramping the chalk in the fingers of the other, Henry Ford wrote his name on this old slate much in the same manner as he did when he was a boy. The name was written in 1932 and has been preserved under glass since that time.

Old Rawsonville Inn Will Be Torn Down

(Continued From Page 1.)

votees who could watch the sport from its porches.

When word was received that the Washtenaw sheriff was on his way, the pit was moved to the Wayne county side of the road. If the Wayne sheriff was coming, the birds were pitted on the Washtenaw side.

Stage coaches stopped there in the early days and the horses were quartered in the barns. Waterway travellers enroute up the Huron river made the inn an overnight stop. Settlers coming from the Monore area on their way to Woodruff's Grove (now Ypsilanti) or Ann's Arbor, (now Ann Arbor) stopped there for rest and provisions. Indians traded furs there.

Caleb Barlow, grandfather of Mrs. Mosley and Mrs. Bennett, came to the settlement in 1837. He and his son, Edwin, operated a drygoods store and post office.

Caleb Barlow also owned the flour mill in the village and it apparently was left to his son Edwin, who had gone to Kansas to take up a claim. That was in 1885 and he remained there until 1895, when he returned to Rawsonville. He had just obtained new machinery for the mill when the flood washed it away.

When the Barlows purchased the old inn has not been established but a deed found in the building is dated April 14, 1855.

Amariah Rawson, who came to the are when Ypsilanti was only two years old, was a leader in the community and named it Michigan City. Within a short time, however, the name was changed to Rawsonville when he became the postmaster and justice of the peace.

Originally the settlement had been called Snow's Landing for Henry H. Snow who, with his wife, Sally, were the first settlers.

Rawsonville for many years was bigger than either Ypsilanti or Ann Arbor and even bid to have the University of Michigan located there.

The little church, which was dedicated with pride in 1879, and which finally deteriorated to apple storage, is also to be torn down to make way for the new highway.

In its heyday Rawsonville had a cheese factory, woolen mill, flour mill, drygoods and general stores, blacksmith, wagon maker, carriage and wagon manufacture yarn maker and cooper.

The Wabash Railroad was built about three miles south of the village and the Michigan Central to the north. After that, the bypassed settlement began to die on the vine until even the bridge across the Huron River quietly collapsed one night in 1936.

The river itself deteriorated to a dribble and the buildings in the village began to fall down. Lumber from some was used to prop up others but eventually, all but a few structures disappeared.

When a new bridge was built and the Detroit Edison Company constructed a dam which created a lake, the beauty of the valley was restored.

A new boom started during the second World War but all the new homes, the church and the school were at the top of the hill, leaving the valley lost in a pocket of time.

Now the new road will be built higher than the steeply picturesque one and will make the pocket deeper.

Soon traffic will whiz through, drivers never knowing that the river they cross was called Giwitatigweiasibi by the Indians, that the road they follow was the "Great Trail" to the redskin, or that their own ancestors passed this way enroute to the building of a great state.

ne 13, 1962

Experts Prepared To Do Some Snooping Too

FERNANDO BELAUNDE TERRY, candidate of Peru's popular Action Party, is carried on the shoulders of his jubilant supporters Tuesday after he addressed a 'victory' rally in downtown Lima. Belaunde also claimed victory in a TV broadcast. Rival candidates in the presidential election issued conflicting claims of victory. (UPI Radiotelephoto)

Algiers Premier Rejects Change In Agreement

TUNIS (AP)—Algerian nationalist Premier Youssef Ben Khedda categorically rejected today the possibility of revising the Algerian peace agreements to give further guarantees to European residents.

The head of the Algerian provisional government charged that "a series of maneuvers" is being made "in an attempt to sabotage the Evian (peace) agreements by making it appear possible they can be revised under the pretext of giving additional guarantees to the Europeans."

"My government categorically excludes this possibility," Ben Khedda said.

Ben Khedda, who made his statement as he left for Cairo, said, "The return of real peace can only be realized through the loyal application of the accords concluded at Evian."

Ben Khedda's statement came after two weeks of contacts between representatives of Algeria's European minority and members of the Algerian provisional executive body which is governing the North African territory until the July 1 self-determination referendum.

The European Secret Army Organization, trying to preserve French rule in Algeria, let up on its killing of Moslems when the secret contacts were begun. The secret army recently intensified scorched earth tactics, destroying schools and other installations by fire and explosives.

Ben Khedda's declaration may be followed by a resumption of large-scale murder of Moslems.

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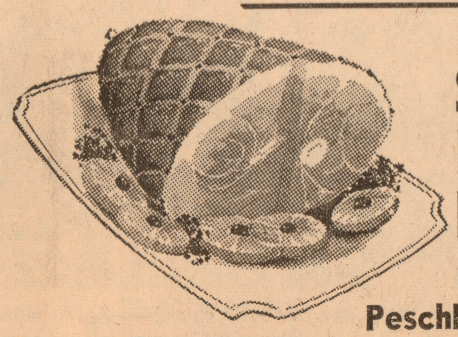

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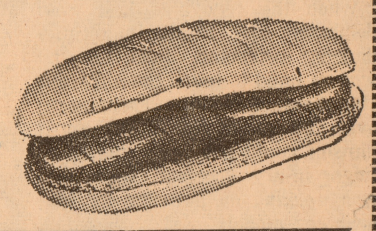

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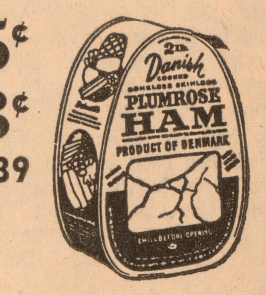

3 for 33¢
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